



TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes Wednesday, June 3, 2020 Special Meeting Via Videoconference

Attendees: Harold Bailey (Presiding), Bernicestine McLeod, Maggie Mudd, Judy Hamer, Catherine Lewis, Rev. Alison Patton, Althea Seaborn, Elaine Daignault, Catherine Onyemelukwe, Jim Marpe (First Selectman), Zoe Tarrant, Ramin Ganeshram, Stephane Kirven, and Dolores Paoli

Guests: Danielle Dobin (Planning & Zoning Chair), Foti Koskinas (Chief, Westport Police), Sam Arciola (Deputy Chief, Westport Police), Danielle Teplica, Lee Goldstein (Westport Board of Education), Lauren Francese (Westport Schools), Rebecca Marsick (Staples High School), David Farrell (Captain, Westport Police), Ryan Paulsson (Captain, Westport Police), Jacob Santos (Westport Playhouse), Michael Barker (Westport Playhouse), Candace Banks, Robie Spector, David Abbey (Interim Superintendent, Westport Schools), Keri Jockers (Bedford Middle School), Stafford Thomas (Principal, Staples High School), Candice Savin (Chair, Westport Board of Education), Ed Wooldridge (School Resource Officer), Shanelle Henry (Greens Farms Academy), Eileen Ward (Children's Community Development Center), Ted Gillman, Tom Foran, Melissa Kane (Third Selectman), Natasha Johnson (TEAM Staples and Graduating Senior), Tom Scarice (Incoming Superintendent, Westport Schools), and two attendees by phone

The meeting was called to order at 8:00am by Harold.

8:00 Welcome / Approval of Minutes:

Catherine Onyemelukwe moved that we approve the minutes of our February 4, 2020 meeting.

Maggie seconded the motion.

Catherine Onyemelukwe moved that we approve the minutes of our March 3, 2020 meeting.

Judy seconded the motion.

Both sets of minutes were approved unanimously and will be posted.

8:05 Introduction – Harold:

Harold reviewed the agenda and stated that today's meeting agenda is very aggressive. We have not met since early March because of COVID-19. In the meantime, this has become a very sensitive time in our country because of the emphasis on race after the murder of George Floyd. This is a special meeting with the focus on race in all of the areas we normally discuss. We are now more aware of the "two Americas" described in the 1968 Kerner Commission report. While inequities are now really being shown, it is becoming more obvious that fatal incidents can be triggered by phone calls to police when people of color, particularly black people, are doing trivial, normal things. These calls are random and can be very lethal. Police have to respond to the situation when they are called. Why is that type of call happening in the first place? This is the type of question that is being asked nationwide. While the situation is scary, it is rewarding in that we can get at the ideas and policies that create these incidents. Look at the TEAM Westport minutes to see what we have been talking about even over just the past 6 months and you'll see that we were ahead of the current headlines. Now our work is about really changing policy and practices after 400 years. Several town organizations have made statements – the Playhouse, the Schools, the Police, and the Town. Let's get to work! As a starter, the TEAM Staples group will be demonstrating on this Friday afternoon at 1:30. Scheduling a meeting has been prohibited during this period. We cannot just hold a Zoom meeting but have to schedule a slot through the Town. Jim Marpe suggested that we start meeting again in light of the current situation. We appreciate the opportunity.

8:15 First Selectman – Jim Marpe:

"Harold, you and I remember the Kerner Commission." Jim was glad to see so many people in attendance and announced that Tom Scarice is joining us today as well. This has certainly been a troubling time. Over the weekend, the Town made a statement along with the Police that we reject everything with regard to the murder of Mr. George Floyd. We reiterated at the Board of Selectmen's meeting that Westport's commitment to equity is even stronger now. How do we translate statements into meaningful actions as to



TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes Wednesday, June 3, 2020 Special Meeting Via Videoconference

how we behave toward each other? For centuries, inequity has been in existence. TEAM Westport has played a pivotal role in moving us forward as a Town. Importantly, how can we improve and move forward together? Jim hopes that we can resolve inequity through action. Demonstrations in Westport have been peaceful and have set the right tone. Unfortunately, some businesses have boarded up. We can't predict the future; however, we can protect our businesses. Jim hopes they will quickly un-board. On behalf of the Town, at least the government of the Town, we recommit ourselves to support social justice and equity, so that we can move forward.

8:30 Policing:

Harold told a quick story about how his daughter at an early age had been told in school that "your policeman is your friend". He realized quickly that it was time for "the talk" which we had later with his son. When growing up in two worlds, white versus black, you're always cautious. It is literally up to individual police officers whether you can get thrown down on the ground or treated well. Something more sinister could happen. That is not rare among people of color – male or female. Almost all of us have had to deal with, at least, this fear and embarrassment, if not something more serious. Here in Westport, with Chief Koskinas, we are talking about a different kind of policing to make sure that we don't end up with the kind of extreme policing on display and of which we're becoming more aware. We are working on how to minimize bad experiences. We can also talk about what goes on here for Westport citizens of color as well as for people who come through Westport and those who work in Westport. This concern is not rare. Chief Koskinas thanked Harold for introducing him and the topic and introduced his staff members on the call. We are taking this very seriously. In Minneapolis, it was devastating that 3 other policemen watched and participated in some way as Mr. Floyd was being killed and it seemed OK for them to do that. Looking at the history of incidents, they reflect the communities where they take place. A guardian approach by the police officers was not taken, but rather a warrior and a revenue approach – as in Ferguson where policing created revenue for the city. So, we can't be surprised by what happened. In his 4 and ½ years as chief, Chief Koskinas said that the Town and people on this panel have guided him. We can deal with our public and have helped the public move forward. Our police officers wear body cams and are required to turn them on. We have use-of-force policies as well as training in de-escalation techniques. We are far from perfect but need to be between very good and excellent. The Town will welcome protests as long as they are peaceful and respectful to visitors and residents. Let Chief Koskinas know what our community expects. In his disappointment and disgust at what happened in Minneapolis, he kneels with you and will march with you. [Harold:] The fact that in Minneapolis it was not just one officer but 3 other officers shows there are problems with culture and with procedures. What are standard procedures? Is it OK to handcuff people or throw people up against walls?

[Chief Koskinas]: We should act like human beings. In situations, officers will act based upon their level of confidence and training. What we saw was not natural. At times this is a contact sport, but not as often in our area. When a situation turns into a fight, all of the officers' tools become available to the perceived "bad guy". Once the struggle is on, we have to take care of ourselves and we have an equal responsibility to the other guy. Words can bring on a confrontation. We have to take a caretaker stance once the handcuffs are on. We just don't stand by and watch in normal situations. We need to be the better person. We don't want anyone to be hurt. We are the trained professional and need to know what the next step should be. The George Floyd offense was not necessarily an arrestable offense. It may have been handled by a ticket.

- We currently have one use-of-force complaint against us. We are comfortable defending it. We don't deal with complaints on a normal basis. We act based upon the Town's expectations. For a normal arrest, if someone has done something that is non-violent, what should be done? Do they have to be handcuffed? It depends upon the crime and depends upon the actions of the suspect. It is routine to pat someone down



TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes Wednesday, June 3, 2020 Special Meeting Via Videoconference

and to handcuff them if we are taking them to a booking facility. It depends upon the suspect. The procedures are consistent, but our action will vary based on the suspect's behavior.

[Maggie]: How do you handle the president saying that the police should dominate and get tough? How are police chiefs dealing with this messaging?

[Chief Koskinas]: We don't do that here since these are not the Town's expectations. This community is different. If we saw looting, we would have to take a different approach; and we would have to react differently if someone is hurting people.

[Stephane]: Is there a different standard with police misconduct and holding them accountable?

[Chief Koskinas]: Over the past 4 years, we have become accredited. We use best practices and national standards. We were operating with a manual from 1972. We updated it. It included language about Blackjacks and revolvers. How can we be held accountable if we don't have the proper language?

- Connecticut is way ahead of other states, however, with gun policies and use-of-force policies. The State tracks just about everything. We also limit shooting into moving vehicles. We can't pursue cars, since that puts everyone into danger. Still there is so much work to be done. It all goes back to training and hiring.
- Sometimes because of the unions, firing is difficult. 80% of 700,000 police officers in the United States are OK, while 10% (70,000) should not be there.

[Stephane]: What is the policy on rehiring?

[Chief Koskinas]: Most officers can go to another department and be rehired, but not in Connecticut. You have to be retested, pass a polygraph, redo a psych exam and interviews. We look at consistencies and inconsistencies and at how the officer got to that point.

- This is the most difficult time in 24 years. We cannot go through this without support while holding the department accountable. Thank you. If there's any input or criticism, Chief Koskinas will welcome it.

[Harold]: What are you excited about with respect to your work at the State?

[Chief Koskinas]: At the State level, Connecticut police chiefs are united despite little diversity. They have been talking about how to address this lack for years. The biggest question is are we being accountable on the use of force? In Connecticut, you are accountable when you lay your hands on people.

[Harold]: The Chief has been meeting with police from around the country, so he has a purview of what's going on nationally and internationally. He has attended courses at Harvard as well. Most of the training is through the ADL (mostly in DC). So, he has had a unique opportunity to get a perspective beyond Westport.

[Chief Koskinas]: All the frustrations are the same. Although what we can do at the government level comes down to community and public trust, the police force has to be transparent and own up to mistakes.

9:00 Schools / Strategic Planning / Staples / Board of Ed:

Harold stated that he had been scheduled to give a presentation about our school environment and racism at a TEAM Westport-hosted parent meeting coordinated by Zoe and Catherine L. just before COVID hit. We have a positive situation in the school system with Stafford Thomas as Staples' principal, with the faculty and administrators, with the Interim Superintendent David Abbey, and the Board of Education (BOE) chaired by Candice Savin. Harold acknowledged the statements made Dr. Abbey and Ms. Savin at the last BOE meeting. Harold was glad to see the statement that the Town is going to look closely at race. It has been a joy to work with David over the past year and we look forward to working with Tom.

[David Abbey]: It has been a joy working with you over the past 13 months. We have a relationship and have stayed connected although we may not always agree. My understanding of the world has changed since I've been here through my engagement with TEAM Westport. The immediate issue that brings us here is symptomatic of a systemic issue.

- In terms of the police, we have SRO Wooldridge who was in place a year before Dr. Abbey came. Dr. Abbey has heard that things are going well at Staples. During his first 2 weeks here, he asked for additional



TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes Wednesday, June 3, 2020 Special Meeting Via Videoconference

help in Special Ed and for an SRO at the Middle School. Anytime we have all of those students, he felt we needed someone outside the building for protection and prevention. He worked closely with the Police Department and officer Brian has been there all year. Police presence is necessary if it's done right.

- Working with TEAM Westport has prompted us to do things I would not have done. We brought in 2 trainers from the Anti-racism Center at American University for 40 administrators. It brought practical results in the way we hire, our hiring emphasis, and in our making sure people of color are on hiring committees.
- He heard concerns about faculty members of color who were cut due to budget issues (Last Hired First Fired). It did not happen this year, even though we had to reduce the budget. Everyone is staying. We want to hire more teachers and admins of color. Nationally, 2% of the teachers are African American males. This is a problem and it needs to be higher and makes it harder for us. We were able to hire one African American male Elementary teacher. Going forward, it is a priority. John Bayer (our HR staff person) is on a statewide committee to help identify and recruit teachers and administrators of color.
- During the course of the year, we heard from students of color by way of the TEAM Westport essay contest, Stafford Thomas (Staples principal), and TEAM Staples. Issues came to a head because of the February 14th letter and we have been confronting concerns. Anecdotal evidence is critical, but are we improving over time? It's time for another climate survey to be given to the district. Data over the past 2 years is encouraging, but work must be done. The climate survey disaggregates on race. We get to see how students feel in each race breakdown. We understand and are committed to doing it.
- Candice stated at the BOE meeting that there is considerable work to do in training, hiring, and the curriculum and we are committed to do it. These issues have become part of our consciousness. We made sure that TEAM Westport spoke with the recruiter for the Superintendent position. The Board spoke with candidates of color. Tom has made the connection with TEAM Westport already. This is wholly different. A number of members of the School District are on this call as well as two members of the BOE.
- We are on track to strengthen our curriculum with regard to racism, PreK – 12. Lauren sent out the message to the Social Studies teachers that this is a moment that we have to teach in the moment not next year. It's emerging, it's happening nationally, it's happening here. The principals and the teachers understand the importance. Lauren has sent out resource information as to how to deal with this issue.
[Judy]: Will the teachers be trained in talking about race with respect to George Floyd since they are not comfortable talking about race? My concern is with Climate Surveys: who gets the results, how do they follow up, and how do they understand best practices?

[Dr. Abbey]: Teachers need to be able to have difficult conversations and so they need training. However, in the short term, we have sent out resource materials. In the long term, teachers have to understand it is part of their responsibility and we have to have guidelines. This is complex and emotional. However, it's necessary to do. One of the principals sent out a statement with regard to George Floyd and received a lot of positive feedback. However, there was some negative feedback.

- With regard to the climate survey, I was not here during the last survey. How the results are shared and how we act upon the results, we need to be responsible for and accountable to the process. Going forward, above and beyond reacting, there should be an understood mechanism as to how to proceed.

[Candi]: ADL trained the teachers, but we need to have systematic training – organized and focused upon curriculum and instructions, but also on how students are identified and disciplined including special ed. Dr. Abbey talked about early in his career when he was in a school district that was 35% African American students. His reactions to African American students was not what it should have been. It was easier with white students because of his background and his lack of training. It took him 6 months of interacting with colleagues of color to understand how to interact with people who were not white. The issue is not to be neutral about it but how to change how we work with each other.



TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes Wednesday, June 3, 2020 Special Meeting Via Videoconference

[Stafford]: David, Lauren, Rebecca, Officer Ed, thank you. It's not just a matter of looking at a survey, but to hear the views of actual students. Students who are marginalized started to come to me on their own in November. While the February letter was a focal point, it was not a boiling point. People do not know how to talk about race and that is a key fact. Our first attempt to look at how students were being treated was specifically to look at their stated microaggressions and any implicit bias incidents. With George Floyd, it's obvious to be appalled, but people don't know what to say about race. We are all in quarantine and feeling fear about the virus. We talk about treating everyone better after this without getting into the effect on race. How do we treat other people? The police were called on a bird watcher. We now look at the looting versus the issues under protest. No one will say they are racist.

- We're looking at addressing microaggressions with the faculty and the impact on other students and administrators. We are trying to get there. We want to talk in small groups, but it's hard at the high school level to do virtually. We need a safe environment. Nothing in a climate survey would necessarily jump out. However, we look at what we have in order to talk. When the students came to me to talk, they were not pointing out other students. They were pointing out gestures and comments that made them feel a certain way. My feelings about now are different from yours based on my experiences. It's hard to address feelings.

[Harold]: It's good that you are focusing on specific instances. We sat down with the students of color at Staples and they gave us a list of things. The fact that you can have a faculty discussion is wonderful. These gestures and comments are the kinds of things that can alienate students without anyone realizing. Regular discussions are important so people can internalize and adjust their reaction. We are putting together a list of those. We have already put together student, faculty, admin, and parent microaggressions. More than the training is what the students are saying, so that faculty can adjust their own behavior positively.

[Candi]: there are aggression aggressions going on in these social platforms. Some are anonymous. Some are really shocking. I don't personally have the answer, but it is a problem. It would be good to give some thought as to how to tackle locally. Does this group have thoughts?

[Zoe]: I really appreciate from hearing from the school officials. We need principals of color in our middle and elementary schools, so that we could hear these issues earlier. If we were to have an essay contest earlier, that would be great. High school is too late. I am afraid of the Amy Coopers that are generating at the early ages. There are bright spots that have come out from our administrators, though.

[Harold]: Eileen Ward, head of the Pre-K organization for Weston, Westport, and Fairfield, is on the call. We were going to host a session for Pre-K parents that was postponed because of COVID. We'll find a way to get the information out. Zoe's point is well taken that early reach is important.

[Lauren]: In preparing teachers to talk about race in Social Studies, teachers have read books and have spoken in high school brave spaces with students and with Social Studies faculty. On Monday, questions came to Lauren about what resources to use. Never before have teachers beat her to the punch to find out how to talk about the topics – a good result of the work done this year. Teachers are sharing how they're having the conversation and giving each other feedback. The professional book clubs went a long way in creating the conversations. We are now focusing on racial abuse as well as the microaggressions. We are having raw conversations and what that means for our everyday interactions in Social Studies with students. More resources are being pushed out today.

[Tom]: Thank you for reaching out. I have been able to get acquainted with the community early. This is a centuries-old problem and a complex problem requiring a complex solution complicated by all that's going on with health, equity, finances, etc. Partnership is important. When teachers are clear, they'll run through walls to solve the problem. Chief Foti has taken knowledge and put it into action. This is what is needed. The Schools have been wrestling with "the problem", but we are a big spoke in the wheel. We don't have to



TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes Wednesday, June 3, 2020 Special Meeting Via Videoconference

solve the problem ourselves, though. Quoting a tweet from Denzel (summary included here): “Resistance is not a one-lane highway.... We need all of those lanes.”

Schools are at their best when we are left to teach and we can certainly teach the younger children, as well. For example, changes have occurred in how we treat students with disabilities in education. Certainly, with changes in policy and law and in hearts and minds, we can affect the future.

9:15 PTA Parent Updates / Book Clubs /Film / Other – Catherine Lewis and Zoe Tarrant

[Catherine]: Zoe and Catherine have attempted over the last 4 years to encourage parents and children to talk about race; but they are sometimes met with defensiveness. They have tried to debunk the myth of color blindness by talks at PTA meetings, at the schools, and at the Library. Many people think and say that they “don’t see color”. We are hopeful, but there’s lots of work to do. White people are taught to not talk about race from an early age and we do not do it well. We have to get out of our own way. It’s a good time in Westport to do so. We know we are good people, but things keep happening and nothing really changes. These conversations are bumpy and uncomfortable; however, we have to keep talking.

[Zoe]: It is “white people” work that has to be done in our community. We have made strong inroads and parents have been cultivated and are active. We have worked in collaboration with the PTA Council. We do not have a Director of Inclusion in the school system, so we are developing a system of TEAM Westport PTA reps who serve at the school level. However, having these reps in these positions does not preclude having a Director of Inclusion. Our Book Clubs are now being held in coordination with the Library and our next virtual session is on June 8th. These sessions give us access to people in the community. We want to increase the level of communication. The myth of color blindness is alive and well. We keep hearing that people are so happy “our kids are color blind”, but that is not solving the problem. There’s a lot of work to be done.

[Lauren]: The PTA now has Diversity Reps.

[Catherine]: Our push is to have PTA reps in each school that focus on race and not simply diversity. We see discomfort with the focus on race and this speaks to the hesitancy in the PTA to name race-based bias and anti-racism for what it is. It is easier to talk about bias and diversity versus racism.

[Lauren]: There is a Teaching and Learning committee meeting for reopening the discussion. Ali Moran has been working (with Rebecca, Faith, and Keri) on racism and teaching and learning. The work on race is a priority for that group.

[Harold & Zoe]: The focus is to have the TEAM Westport parents group assigned to the schools and to have Catherine and Zoe stay in contact with them – thus keeping some parent representation under the TEAM Westport umbrella.

[Catherine & Zoe]: On June 8th we’ll have another virtual book group discussion of How to be an Anti-Racist by Ibram X. Kendi and on July 14th a discussion of Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi. If anyone has been shy about a Kendi book, Jason Reynolds is talented and an easy read for students as young as 10. We hope to get parents and young people involved and to provide collaborative trainings as to how to talk to students about race. Zoe’s family has read it and discussed. We have to practice. Some of the meetings have shown that parents and teachers want more tools.

[Rebecca]: The audio version of Stamped is great.

[Harold]: We can have extended conversations over the summer using breakout rooms and we can tie into what the Interfaith Council and the Westport Museum are doing.

[Natasha Johnson]: The student-led protest is scheduled for this Friday, June 5th at 1:30 starting at the Bridge.

[Harold]: Thank you and congratulations to Natasha. She is off to the University of Pennsylvania.

[Maggie]: In partnership with the Library, we are working on a film series featuring African-American films and will be showing and discussing these over a period of time with a host that would kick each session off. Netflix Group Watch may be used to view the films virtually and at the same time as if we were at a theater.



TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes Wednesday, June 3, 2020 Special Meeting Via Videoconference

[Stephane]: *Just Mercy* is now available on Amazon from Warner Brothers.

[Danielle T.]: Everyone is focused on race now, but the protests will die down. It might be helpful to have a motto for TEAM to remind everyone that it is ongoing. Responsibility work needs to be done and people want to do something in response to pain and tragedy.

[Harold]: Action Required: We have been doing this for a while (17 years), so we should have commitment and our work should have staying power, but we'll consider the suggestion and will try to come up with a mantra of engagement to build the momentum. If you can think of a mantra that might apply, it would be good to keep reminding everyone of what needs to be done.

9:25 Westport Library

Bill Harmer has announced two exciting speakers who will be coming up soon for Library programming on race – Quentin Williams (a former FBI agent) and General Wesley Clark. Stay tuned.

9:35 MLK/Clergy

- We were in the midst of planning a trip to Montgomery, AL, to visit the Equal Justice Initiative and the Museum and Legacy Memorial there. Due to Covid-19, the trip is on hold.
- The Clergy will be working with us on conversations.

9:45 Westport Museum of History – Ramin Ganeshram

- We have completely shifted our approach to talking about history. Before, we were objective about what we presented and hoped that people would draw accurate conclusions. The exhibit “Remembered” exemplifies that approach based on primary source evidence of the facts. We hope it was clear. Now we will more overtly interpret facts for you since you can take facts and interpret something different especially about inequity. We won't be neutral since facts of American history have failed with regard to equity and race. For example, yesterday's program theme was to be the Civil War. The Museum did not feel it was an appropriate presentation, so the Museum posted a statement on Facebook and asked for donations, instead, for TEAM Westport (\$250 collected already) and other organizations. Our position will be posted in our newsletter.
- Ramin had a conversation with Lauren to put together a video about civil rights in Westport history from research and primary materials to provide to the teachers for the last 9 days of school along with a reading list and a list of resource material from other Museums. We expect to help teachers. It will be made available to the public as well and should engender some conversations.
- The Museum wants to create a Historian's dictionary to talk about the appropriate language to use in talking about race.
- The Museum is planning a video exhibit about the Revolution in Westport for July 4th, talking about contributions of African Americans and riots – for example, the Boston Tea Party was a justified riot.
- On this Friday, the Museum is featuring a panel with Harold, Michael Barker, and Jen Tooker discussing the oral history project during COVID (Westport in Focus). All of the panelists participated in the exhibit that asked people how they are dealing with the pandemic. Now the focus will shift, so that people can talk about anything going on now including protest and equality. The Museum will not editorialize on this oral history project and everyone's position will be given in a fair forum.
- You'll see a fair amount from us with regard to race and equity in the future.

9:55 Essay Contest

We have informed the winners (3 out of 32) that they have won; but we have not announced who won what. It now looks like that may not happen until after September depending upon Library availability. We shall look at hosting a virtual event. It will happen. These essays on stereotypes just extend our cache of microaggression essays.



TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes Wednesday, June 3, 2020 Special Meeting Via Videoconference

10:05 Affordable Housing – Danielle Dobin:

We have been working to support a 90% affordable town house community designed for families in Westport and are continuing to talk to the Sgate about a possible tract of land. Hopefully, this will come out well in light of current events. We have an opportunity to make a change. The P&Z is bipartisan. We are trying to make some inroads in removing the cap on multi-family housing and are looking at allowing accessory dwelling housing. We want to remove barriers that prevent affordable housing development. Westport did not become white by chance: realtors would not show all houses; covenants existed/exist as to who can purchase land. There is real work to change zoning laws.

Action Required: The next Affordable Housing Subcommittee meeting will be this week, so everyone's invited to attend. Catherine O. and Judy would like to be informed as to when the meeting is.

[Ramin]: If you want to, the Westport Museum can post the meeting with the registration information.

10:15 Westport Country Playhouse – Michael Barker

- The Playhouse has screened a panel discussion of the documentary *A Secret Love* (available on Netflix) on its Youtube channel. Maggie was very impressed by this and stated that it is one of the most thoughtful panels she has heard. The Playhouse is optimistic about getting groups of people together to have difficult conversations on tender subjects.
- The Playhouse is working with Kelli O'Hara on an event coming soon featuring Fairfield County students.
- The Playhouse has posted a statement that they are standing by, but they need to say more about how to dismantle white supremacy in a more systematic way. "Resources to stay informed and be an agent of change" are listed on the Playhouse website supporting Black Lives Matter. Harold thanked the Playhouse for their statement and indicated that their commitment is in their strategic plan. He applauded Michael, Mark Lamos, and the Board for making racial diversity and outreach a part of the Playhouse's focus.
- Jacob Santos has been hosting a Q&A program on *Instagram Live* every Thursday during coffee hours called Coffee Break, interviewing artists of color. They plan to use this platform to discuss race more. Jacob is heading off to Yale (this is his last meeting with us) and he is now working with Michael to figure out how to continue the Coffee Break programming. Jacob appreciates his work with us. All the best to Jacob!
- The Playhouse is not doing any live performances this year due to Covid-19 and will be closed through January or February. Nearly 100% of the organizations have shut down. They are just beginning to discuss action plans. The industry has been decimated and things will not improve anytime soon. The Playhouse is 90 years old! They are receiving support from many sources financially and otherwise including the Westport Arts Commission which is considering hosting outdoor programming.

Closing

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30AM.

The next meeting will be held whenever it can be scheduled due to COVID-19 constraints.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernicestine McLeod
Secretary